STUMPTOWN™

GREG RUCKA • MATTHEW SOUTHWORTH • RICO RENZI

ONI PRESS

ISSUE #4

STUMPTOWN™

PORTLAND, OREGON

ISSUE #4

written by
GREG RUCKA

illustrated by
MATTHEW SOUTHWORTH

colored by
RICO RENZI with
MATTHEW SOUTHWORTH

design by
KEITH WOOD

edited by
JAMES LUCAS JONES

ONI PRESS, INC.
publisher JOE NOZEMACK
editor in chief JAMES LUCAS JONES
marketing director CORY CASONI
art director KEITH WOOD
operations director GEORGE ROHAC
associate editor JILL BEATON
associate editor CHARLIE CHU
production assistant DOUGLAS E. SHERWOOD

WWW.ONIPRESS.COM • WWW.GREGRUCKA.COM • STUMPTOWNINVESTIGATIONS.COM

STUMPTOWN #4, August 2010. Published by Oni Press, Inc., 1305 SE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Suite A, Portland, OR 97214.

Stumptown is ™ & © 2010 Greg Rucka & Matthew Southworth. Unless otherwise specified, all other material © 2010 Oni Press, Inc. Oni Press logo and icon are ™ & © 2010 Oni Press, Inc. All rights reserved. Oni Press logo and icon artwork created by Dave Gibbons. The events, institutions, and characters presented in this book are fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons living or dead, is purely coincidental. No portion of this publication may be reproduced, by any means, without the express written permission of the copyright holders. PRINTED IN USA.

YOU'RE GRINDING THE *GEARS.*

NO, I'M NOT.

YOU *ARE.*

I'M *NOT.*

IT'S *MY* GODDAMN CAR.

AND YOU'LL GET IT BACK WHEN I GET *MINE,* SWEETHEART.

I WANT MY *GUN* BACK, TOO.

YOU MEAN THE ONE YOU *COLD-COCKED* ME WITH?

THE ONE I HAD TO *TAKE* FROM YOU?

THE ONE THAT WAS *EMPTY? THIS* ONE?

THAT'S THE *ONE.*

NOT ON YOUR *LIFE.*

. . . PARIOS, YOU'VE GOT TO LET *ME* TALK TO HER *FIRST*. . .

. . . SHE'S *SCARED* RIGHT NOW AND IF CHARLOTTE *SEES* YOU--

FUCK.

OH NO.

CHARLOTTE!

OH GOD CHARLOTTE! CHARLOTTE!

HOLD ON.

KLK

LUGGAGE AND LAPTOP ARE *STILL* HERE.

SOMEONE *SNATCHED* HER.

BACK DOOR WAS *LOCKED?*

IT WAS WHEN I LEFT TO MEET *YOU.*

WHOEVER DID IT CAME THROUGH THAT WAY, AND THEY HAD A *KEY.*

THIS CHARLOTTE'S LAPTOP?

THIS IS *YOUR* FAULT.

I'M SORRY *WHAT?*

THIS IS *YOUR* FAULT! *YOU* DID THIS!

IF YOU'D JUST *LEFT* US ALONE I'D HAVE *BEEN* HERE WITH HER!

I WAS *PROTECTING* HER--

--BUT *YOU* JUST--

SHUT UP.

--HAD TO *RUIN* EVERYTHING, YOU JUST HAD TO--

SHUT *UP*, ISABEL.

IT'S YOUR *BROTHER* AND HIS *BRUTE SQUAD.*

ON THE *BRIGHT* SIDE, THAT MEANS *THEY* DIDN'T GRAB CHARLOTTE...

ON THE *DARK* SIDE, IT MEANS YOUR *FATHER* PROBABLY HAS *HER*--

OW!!!

ISABEL? WHERE'S CHARLOTTE? I WANT TO TALK TO HER--

SHE'S *GONE*, SHE'S NOT *HERE*.

<DON'T *LIE* TO ME, BABY SISTER-->

<PAPA *HAS* HER ALREADY, ALL RIGHT? SHE'S *GONE*, WILLIAM PROBABLY TOOK HER!>

<YOU'RE *TOO* LATE, WE'RE *BOTH* TOO *LATE*!>

<SHE'S *GONE*!>

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU BIT ME.

NOW GIVE ME MY GODDAMN *KEYS* BACK, BITCH.

YOU'RE A *REAL* PIECE OF WORK, LADY.

<WHY'S *SHE* HERE?>

<SHE *STOLE* MY CAR.>

<CHARLOTTE'S WITH *PAPA*, OSCAR. FEEL FREE TO LOOK AROUND IF YOU *DON'T* BELIEVE ME.>

<HE'S *FIXING* YOUR MISTAKES, SAME WAY HE *ALWAYS* DOES.>

TAKE A LOOK *AROUND.*

YOUR SISTER'S A *LOVELY* GIRL, YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

BUT SHE'S ALSO *FAMILY*, AND IF I HEAR YOU *REPEAT* WHAT I JUST SAID, I'LL CUT OUT YOUR *FUCKING* TONGUE WITH A *MACHETE.*

JUST LIKE DEAR OLD *DAD, HUH?*

GUESS THE *APPLE* REALLY *DOESN'T* FALL FAR FROM THE *TREE.*

MY SISTER IS A TWO-FACED BITCH WHO'LL STICK A KNIFE IN YOUR BACK THE MOMENT YOU TURN AROUND.

NOW WHY WOULD I *DO* THAT, DILL?

THE FUCK IS THIS? WERE YOU TRYING TO *HIDE* THIS?

OPEN IT.

WHALE, MAKE SURE MISS PARIOS DOESN'T GET ANY *IDEAS*.

FUCKING *CLOTHES* . . .

. . . GIRL STUFF, THAT'S *ALL*

YEAH, SEE, *THIS* IS WHY YOU COULDN'T *FIND* CHARLOTTE, DILL . . .

. . . YOU DON'T FUCKING *LOOK* HARD ENOUGH.

GODDAMN STRAIGHT-A *STUDENTS*, ALWAYS TAKING *NOTES*.

JESUS, SHE KEPT COPIES OF *EVERYTHING*.

YOU WERE TRYING TO *HIDE* THIS?

NEVER CROSSED MY *MIND*.

THINKS SHE CAN SHOW ME UP TO PAPA.

BUT *I'M* NEXT IN LINE, *I'M* THE ONE GOING TO TAKE *OVER* . . .

. . . THERE'S *NO* PLACE IN THE BUSINESS FOR *WOMEN* EXCEPT ON THEIR *BACKS*.

ISABEL DOESN'T *GET* THAT.

YEAH, RIGHT. JUST LIKE ISABEL, TRYING TO *BLACKMAIL* ME.

SAY WHAT?

THAT'S A MIGHTY *PROGRESSIVE* ATTITUDE YOU HAVE THERE, OSCAR.

HEY, THE *TRUTH* HURTS.

WHALE?

AW, COME *ON*, NOT *AGAIN*--

LOOK, I HAD TO TRY.

I UNNERSTAND.

NO HARD FEELINS.

UFFF!

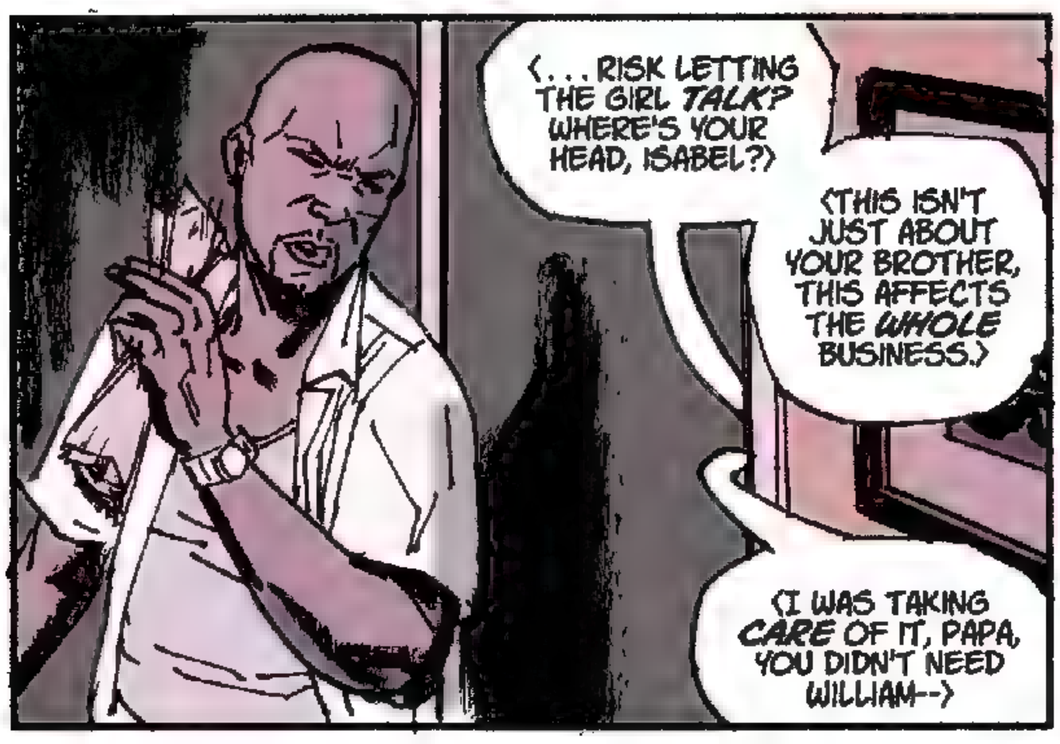
MY ADVICE, PARIOS?

FORGET YOU EVER *HEARD* OF CHARLOTTE SUPPA.

OR ELSE, YOU KNOW, YOU MIGHT END UP THE WAY *SHE'S* HEADED.

DISAPPEARING.

〈WHERE'S MY DAD?〉
〈HE'S IN HIS OFFICE, MR. MARENCO--〉
〈--YOUR SISTER IS WITH HIM.〉


〈. . . RISK LETTING THE GIRL TALK? WHERE'S YOUR HEAD, ISABEL?〉
〈THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT YOUR BROTHER, THIS AFFECTS THE WHOLE BUSINESS.〉
〈I WAS TAKING CARE OF IT, PAPA, YOU DIDN'T NEED WILLIAM--〉

〈YOU WERE TAKING CARE OF IT? HOW? BY HIDING IN HOTEL ROOMS WITH THIS GIRL?〉
〈I HAD A PLAN, WHICH IS MORE THAN OSCAR EVER HAS! FIRST IT WAS ELECTRONICS, THEN METH, NOW THIS, PAPA!〉
〈EACH TIME, YOU HAVE WILLIAM FIX HIS MISTAKES!〉

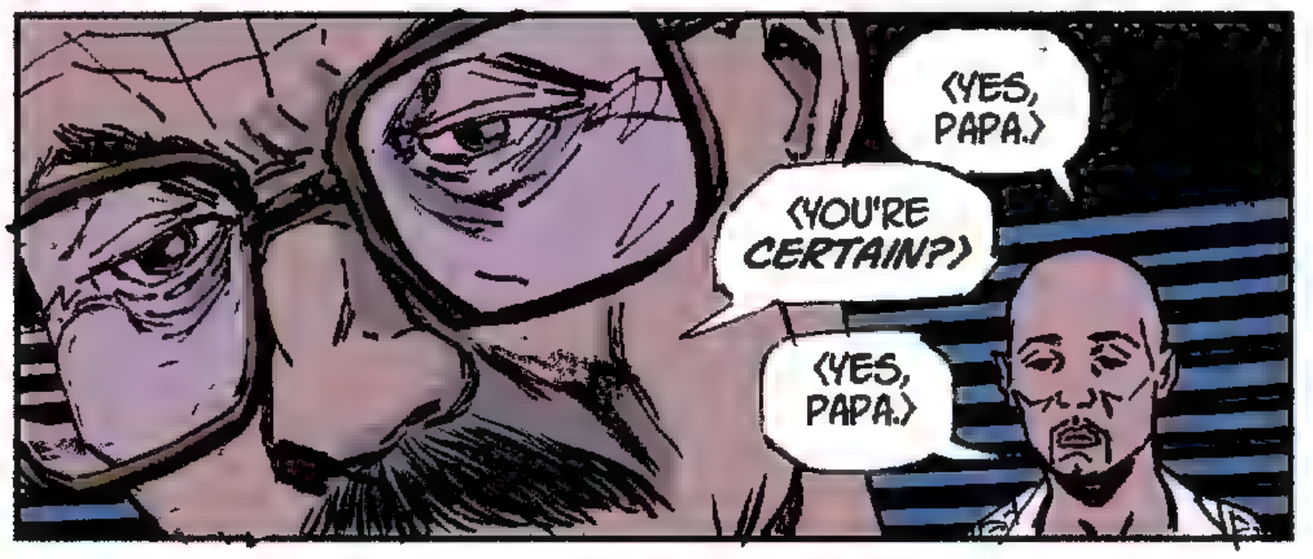
--YOU FUCKING BITCH!
SHE'S LYING, PAPA, I HAD THIS ALL UNDER CONTROL--

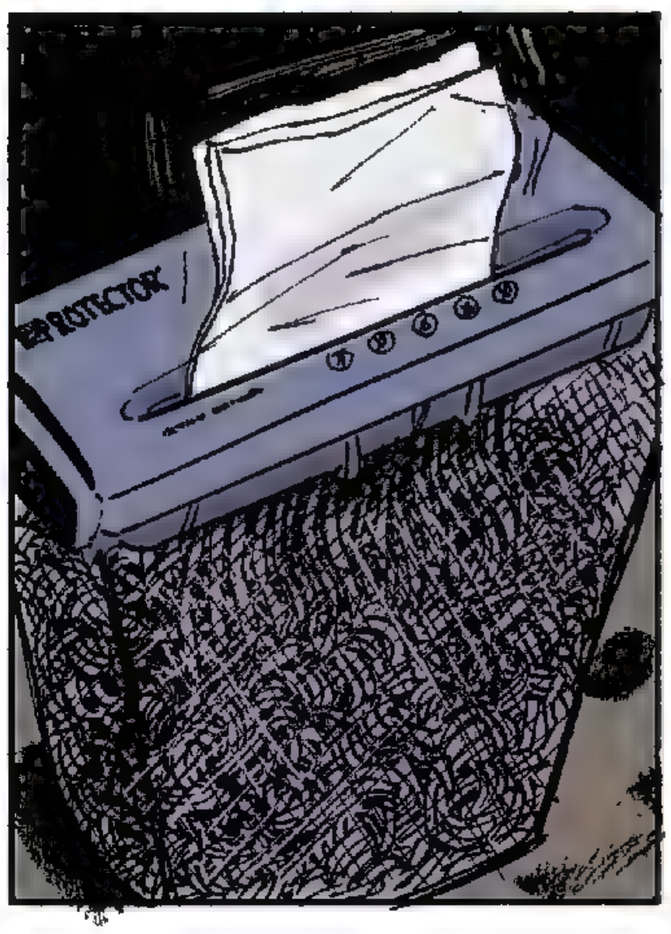
--SHE'S ALWAYS TRYING TO--
I DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING, YOU DO IT YOURSELF--
--MAKE ME LOOK BAD IN FRONT OF YOU--

‹YOU NEVER SPEAK THAT WAY TO OR ABOUT YOUR SISTER.›
‹UNDERSTAND?›

‹YES, PAPA.›

‹IS THIS EVERYTHING? NO OTHER EVIDENCE, ONLY THE GIRL'S WORD?›


‹YES, PAPA.›
‹YOU'RE CERTAIN?›
‹YES, PAPA.›


PROTECTOR

〈WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH THE TWO OF YOU?〉

〈I'VE GIVEN EACH OF YOU ***EVERYTHING,*** MORE THAN I COULD'VE EVER ***DREAMED*** OF HAVING WHEN I WAS BACK IN THE MARA.〉

〈AND IT'S ***NOT*** ENOUGH?〉

〈YOU THINK I DON'T ***KNOW*** WHAT YOU DO IN THOSE HOTEL ROOMS, ISABEL?〉

〈I KNOW WHEN SOMEONE SKIMS THE TAKE IN KLAMATH FALLS, BUT YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW?〉

〈YOUR MOTHER WOULD ***DIE*** OF ***SHAME*** IF SHE WERE HERE TO SEE YOU.〉

〈AND YOU. WHAT'S THE ***MATTER*** WITH ***YOU,*** BOY?〉

〈I SEND YOU TO ***LAW*** SCHOOL, THEY KICK YOU OUT. I SEND YOU TO ***BUSINESS*** SCHOOL, THEY KICK YOU OUT.〉

〈THE ONLY THING YOU ***WANT*** IS THE ***ONE THING I DON'T,*** AND WHEN YOU ***TRY*** IT ANYWAY, YOU ***FAIL*** AT THAT, AS WELL.〉

〈I WANT YOU ***CLEAN,*** YET YOU ***ALWAYS*** FIND YOUR WAY BACK INTO THE ***FILTH.***〉

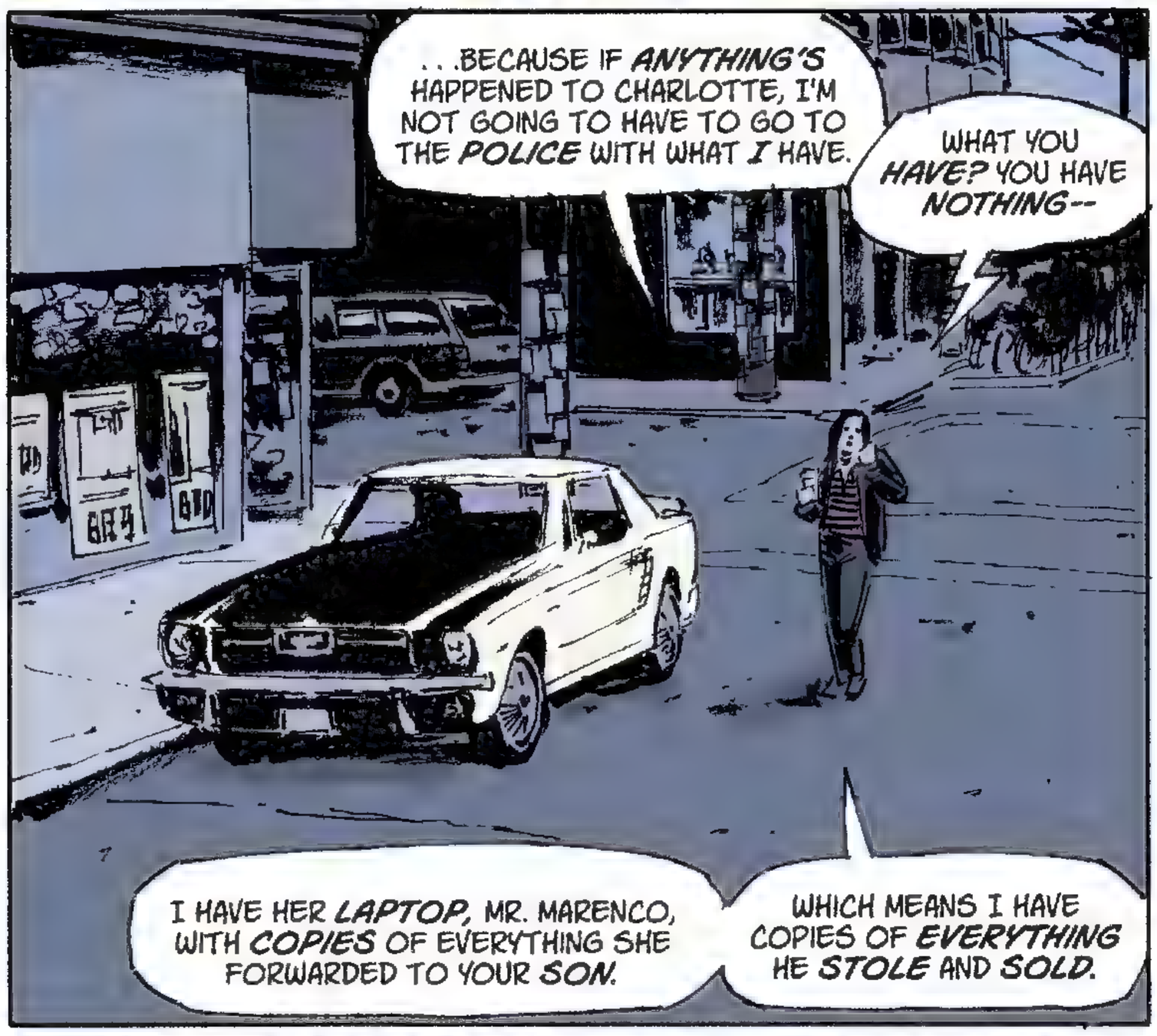
〈MY ***CHILDREN.*** A ***THUG*** AND A ***DEVIANT . . .***〉

〈. . . GOD ***HELP*** ME . . .〉

rnngg

(YES?)
MR. MARENCO? THIS IS DEX PARIOS, REMEMBER ME?
THANKS.

YES, I REMEMBER YOU. YOU *FAILED* TO HONOR OUR ARRANGEMENT.
FORTUNATELY, THE SITUATION HAS *RESOLVED* ITSELF.
OH, I HOPE *NOT*...


...BECAUSE IF *ANYTHING'S* HAPPENED TO CHARLOTTE, I'M NOT GOING TO HAVE TO GO TO THE *POLICE* WITH WHAT *I* HAVE.
WHAT YOU *HAVE?* YOU HAVE *NOTHING*--
I HAVE HER *LAPTOP*, MR. MARENCO, WITH *COPIES* OF EVERYTHING SHE FORWARDED TO YOUR *SON*.
WHICH MEANS I HAVE COPIES OF *EVERYTHING* HE *STOLE* AND *SOLD*.

...I WON'T DISCUSS THIS OVER THE PHONE. IF YOU'D LIKE TO COME TO THE *HOUSE*--
RIGHT, BECAUSE I'M *STUPID*.
I'LL BE AT THE BAR AT THE WHISPERING WINDS CASINO AT NINE.

THAT'S *UNACCEPTABLE*--

OW *OW* OW DAMMIT *OW*--

CUNT!

PAPA?

<DID SHE HAVE A *COMPUTER?!* DID SHE HAVE A *LAPTOP* COMPUTER?!?>

<WHO, CHARLOTTE? YES, SHE. . .>

<. . . OH.>

<LET ME TALK TO PARIOS, I CAN GET IT FOR YOU-->

<AND NOW THAT *DAMN* PI HAS IT. AND NOW *SHE* WANTS TO MAKE A *DEAL.*>

<PAPA, I-->

<YOU'LL STAY *OUT* OF THIS! *BOTH* OF YOU!>

<NOW GET *OUT* OF MY *SIGHT!*>

WHISPERING WINDS

STYX
NOV 18

SUPER SELECT 4WD

PARIOS.

NINE ON THE *DOT.*

ONLY ONE *OTHER* REASON TO BE AT A *CASINO.*

I DON'T *GAMBLE.*

WANT A DRINK?

I'M NOT *HERE* TO DRINK.

I HAVE THE LAPTOP. YOU HAVE CHARLOTTE.

I'LL TRADE YOU THE *ONE* FOR THE *OTHER.*

UNACCEPTABLE.

I'M THINKING THE F.B.I. WOULD GET THE *MOST* OUT OF THE LAPTOP. WHAT ABOUT *YOU?*

OR THE *STATE POLICE,* HELL, THEY'D END UP GIVING IT TO THE FEDS *ANYWAY,* THEN OSCAR WILL BE LOOKING AT *TWO* INVESTIGATIONS--

YOU *TALK* TOO *MUCH.*

I DO, I REALLY DO.

YOU CAN'T KEEP THE *GIRL* FROM TAKING, PARIOS.

AND EVEN IF YOU *COULD,* I'VE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT YOU WOULD KEEP YOUR *OWN* MOUTH *SHUT.*

I CANNOT ACCEPT YOUR TERMS.

THIS IS THE BEST DEAL YOU'RE GOING TO *GET.*

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO *DO*, MISTER MARENCO?

KILL *EVERYONE* WHO KNOWS YOUR SON IS A *FUCK-UP?*

AS NEEDS MUST, PARIOS.

〈YES.〉

〈I'VE GOT IT. IT WAS ON THE FRONT SEAT OF HER CAR.〉

〈GOOD.〉

THAT'S KIND OF *CRAZY*, YOU KNOW THAT?

SUPPOSE WE *MAKE* THIS *EXCHANGE*. . .

. . . WHAT *GUARANTEE* DO I HAVE THAT NEITHER YOU *NOR* THE GIRL WILL SPEAK OF OSCAR'S BUSINESS?

YOU'VE GOT MY *WORD*.

AND THAT IS SUPPOSED TO *SATISFY* ME?

YES, I SUPPOSE IT IS.

MISTER MARENCO, I GAMBLE, I DRINK, I SMOKE, AND I'VE GOT A CAR THAT RUNS *HALF* THE TIME.

I JUST TOOK OUT MY *SECOND* MORTGAGE, HALF MY BILLS ARE PAST DUE, AND MY MENTALLY RETARDED BROTHER PULLS A STEADIER INCOME THAN ME.

I OWN *THREE* PAIRS OF SHOES, *ONE* DRESS THAT I'M NOT ASHAMED TO BE SEEN IN, *TWO* PAIRS OF *JEANS*, AND A COLLECTION OF T-SHIRTS THAT SAY MORE ABOUT MY ADOLESCENCE THAN I CARE TO REMEMBER.

I'M THIRTY-TWO, SINGLE, UNATTACHED, AND THE LAST TIME I WENT ON A DATE THE PRESIDENT WAS *WHITE* AND IN HIS *FIRST TERM.*

MY *WORD* IS *ALL* I HAVE.

WILLIAM JUST REMOVED THE LAPTOP FROM YOUR CAR. HE IS VERIFYING THE CONTENTS.

IF EVERYTHING IS AS YOU CLAIM, I WILL CALL YOU IN THIRTY MINUTES WITH A LOCATION WHERE WE CAN MEET.

I WILL HAND OVER THE GIRL AT THAT TIME.

AND WHAT'S TO STOP YOU FROM PUTTING A BULLET IN *EACH* OF US THEN AND THERE?

NOTHING BUT MY *WORD.*

HOW YOU DOING, KID?

I...

I... JUST WANT TO GO *HOME*...

THEN LET'S GET YOU *OUT* OF HERE.

SUE-LYNNE'S GONNA BE *GLAD* TO SEE--

WAIT.

WE HAD AN AGREEMENT, MISTER MARENCO.

YOU TRIED TO *BLACKMAIL* ME, PARIOS. I *CANNOT* ALLOW THAT.

NO, I *OFFERED* YOU A *DEAL*, BUT SINCE IT LOOKS LIKE YOU WON'T *HONOR* IT . . .

. . . *NOW* COMES THE PART WHERE I *DO* BLACKMAIL YOU.

I MADE *COPIES* OF THE LAPTOP'S *HARD DRIVE*, MISTER MARENCO. *THREE* COPIES, ACTUALLY.

ONE'S IN MY *SAFE DEPOSIT BOX* . . .

. . . ONE'LL BE ON DETECTIVE TRACY HOFFMAN'S DESK AT THE PORTLAND POLICE BUREAU BY MORNING, TO BE OPENED IN THE *EVENT* OF MY *DEATH* OR *DISAPPEARANCE* . . .

. . . AND THE *THIRD* . . .

. . . WELL, THAT ONE'S SOMEPLACE *SECRET*.

SO MUCH FOR YOUR *WORD*.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO JUST PROVED HE CAN'T BE *TRUSTED*.

THE *COPIES* ARE JUST *INSURANCE*.

MY WORD WAS THAT NEITHER CHARLOTTE NOR I WOULD EVER *SPEAK* ABOUT WHAT OSCAR'S BEEN UP TO.

MY WORD IS STILL *GOOD*.

GO.

GO NOW.

BUT *ONE* WORD FROM YOU, EVER, ONE *WHISPER*, AND YOU, YOUR *BROTHER*, AND EVERYONE YOU *KNOW*...

...I WILL CUT THEM INTO *PIECES*--

NO.

YOU *CAN'T* LET HER *DO* THIS, PAPA!

OSCAR--

SHUT UP!

YOU'RE *BLUFFING*, YOU'RE *LYING!* JUST *SHUT UP!*

<I *TOLD* YOU TO STAY *OUT* OF THIS, OSCAR! GO *HOME*-->

SHE'LL HAVE A *BOOT* ON OUR *NECK!*

I CAN *FIX* THIS, I CAN MAKE IT *GO* AWAY!

I CAN *FIX* THIS . . .

. . . I CAN MAKE IT GO AWAY.

NO, YOU REALLY CAN'T, OSCAR.

IT'S OVER.

NO, YOU'RE LYING, YOU'RE BLUFFING--

LET'S GO.

--MAKE ME A *FOOL*, YOU AND ISABEL, NOT *THIS* TIME!

WATCH *ME*, PAPA, I CAN *FIX* THIS--

AAAA

PAPA?

PAPA?

TAKE THE GIRL AND GO.

. . . PAPA . . . ?

. . . I'M SORRY . . .

WHAT IS IT WITH COPS AND DOUGHNUTS?

IT'S *NOT* A DOUGHNUT.

IT'S A *BACON-MAPLE* BAR.

BREAKFAST AND DESSERT ALL IN ONE.

I DIDN'T OPEN IT.

I SHOULD HOPE NOT.

YOU GOING TO TELL ME WHAT'S *INSIDE?*

NOPE.

CATCH YOU LATER, TRACY.

WAIT.

I HEARD SOMETHING *INTERESTING* THIS MORNING.

SOMETHING ABOUT HECTOR MARENCO. ACTUALLY, IT WAS ABOUT HIS *KID*, OSCAR.

SEEMS LITTLE OSCAR MADE A VISIT TO THE ER OUT IN COAST CITY LAST NIGHT.

SEEMS HE GOT *SHOT.*

WELL. . .THE MARENCO'S, MS-13.

THEY PLAY *ROUGH.*

THAT KID YOU WERE LOOKING FOR, CHARLOTTE SUPPA.

THAT'S DONE. I FOUND HER.

I KNOW.

YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, DEX.

THEY PLAY *ROUGH.*

WATCH YOUR BACK.

THEATRE
18 & OVER
PARIS
KEEP PORTLAND WEIRD
RUCKA AND SOUTHWORTH 2010

APPETITE FOR DISTRACTION OR MATTHEW DOES NOT USE HIS TIME WISELY

It takes me no time at all to become desperately lonely.

Everyone's gone to the cabin in Northeastern Washington, up close to the Canadian border, and I'm here alone for a couple of days, finishing Stumptown number four. I'm two days away from the deadline, drawing two pages a day, and I have ten or so to color this time around, too. Part of the fantasy of making comic books is that I can sit down with nothing more than some paper and pens, perhaps even in that little cabin—no phone, no running water, an outhouse, more a shack than a cabin, really—and tell a story. Every step I've been taking has led me closer to that—more competence, more skill!—and further away—more Photoshop, more Sketchup!

The past couple of years (God, it has been a couple of years...) spent working on Stumptown has been joyful, frustrating, collaborative, rewarding, and lonely. When I ask myself what took so long, it wasn't the drawing of the pages, it wasn't laziness, it came down to distraction and fear and loneliness. It's a powerful thing to face yourself in print and in public.

Imagine you're the classic ugly duckling girl we see in every third teen movie, the girl with dirty hair and the almost-but-not-quite-stylish glasses, with bad posture and braces, but you know deep inside you're a swan, and with the power of confidence, cosmetics and dental insurance, you'll be the belle of the ball, and hunky Chad will finally notice you. Except when it's all done, you've got your contacts and your skin has cleared up and you've learned to walk with books on your head, you find you're attractive but not stunning. Chad said hi to you, but he didn't dump Amber; you walk into the prom and ask yourself—what am I doing here?

You look at yourself—or your work, out there for everyone to see—and it's not the dream come true, it's real and vulnerable and flawed. It's the sound of your own voice on tape, alien and embarrassing, that's what I sound like?

My life has changed so much in the past couple of years while working on this book. Where I was managing an apartment building, living alone with my dog, playing in a band, now I live with my girlfriend, her son, my dog, and three cats (and a rotating cast of raccoons I feed every day, including at the moment a family of a mother—blind in one eye, the eye is milky white—and her two babies). I sit at an old drafting table ten to fifteen hours a day, nearly every day, fighting my own distractibility and perfectionism, the feeling that if only I take a little longer to learn this or that drawing skill the story will be so much more convincing. I listen to my dog sleep, her foot scratching at the table leg as she dreams she's running. I listen to the sound of the house, those subliminal sounds of refrigerators or the creek down below, the creaking of this chair, the fan on my laptop.

Making comics is a collection of skills I'm still learning, and the most important ones don't involve an intricate understanding of anatomy or how to draw a staircase in three-point perspective. For me, the skills I've had to learn are how to budget time in an always-fluid workflow. Set a time limit for a page—but how complex is that page? Will it take four hours, will it take eight hours? How many times will you redraw a panel before it's either "right" or you just let it go? Do you draw the book in sequence or in scattered pages? What time is bedtime? This marshaling of energy and time dictates more than just the publication schedule (or lack thereof)—it also dramatically affects the feeling of value, of self-worth, of feeling like a professional. Some days I put in twelve, fifteen hours at the table and still feel like I'm lazy.

As a child, I consistently got two comments on my report cards: "Matthew does not play well with others" and "Matthew does not use time wisely".

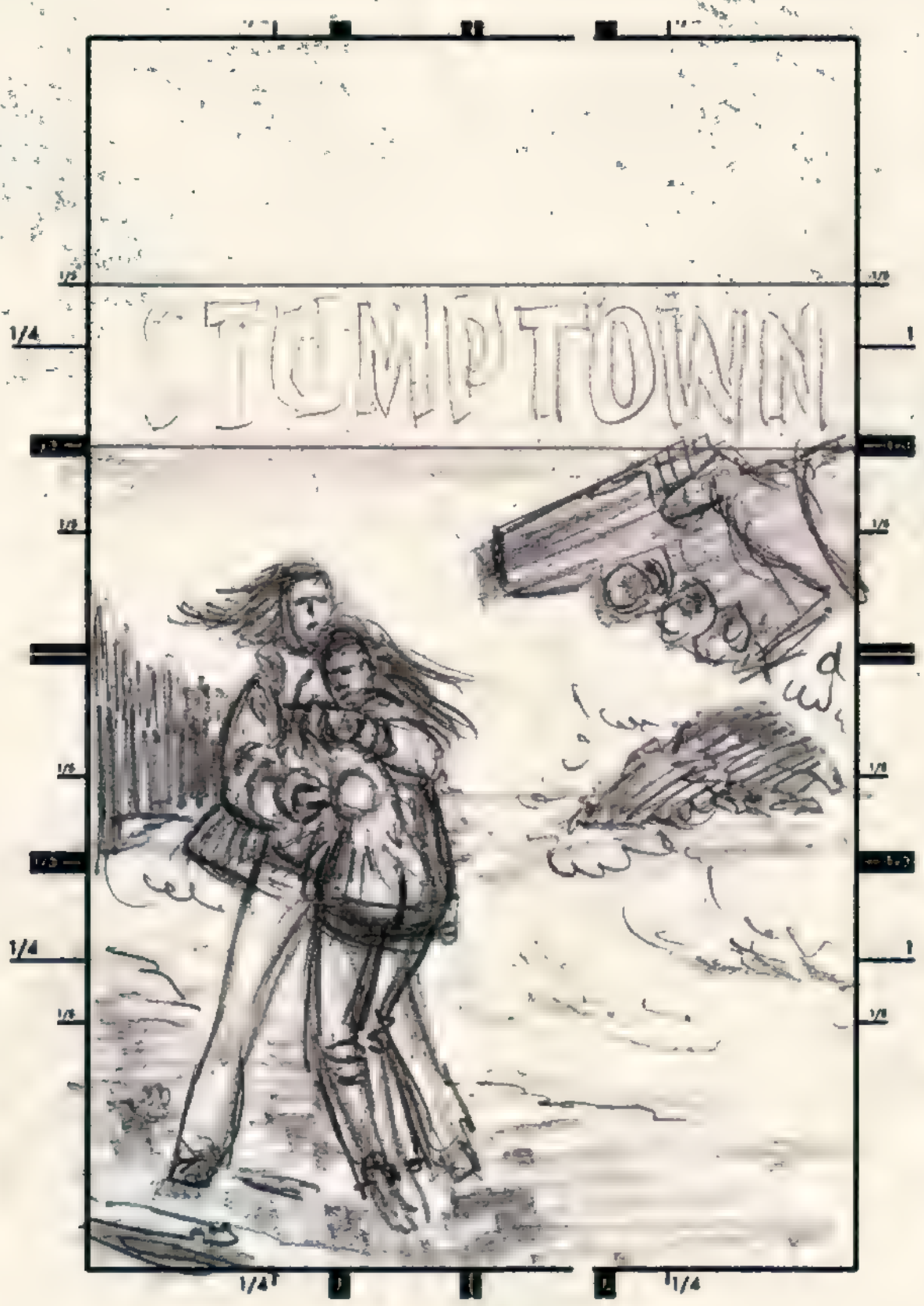
This week I've been watching/listening to THE GODFATHER Trilogy on Blu-Ray while I work, and I noticed something. Throughout all four issues of Stumptown, Dex has had a black eye, which I always likened to the bandage on Jake Gittes' nose in CHINATOWN. But look at THE GODFATHER—Michael gets punched in the face by Sterling Hayden, and he walks around with his jaw clenched and his eye swollen for quite some time. It's the same eye, and I think I've been thinking of that bruise this whole time but never realized it here until the very tail end...

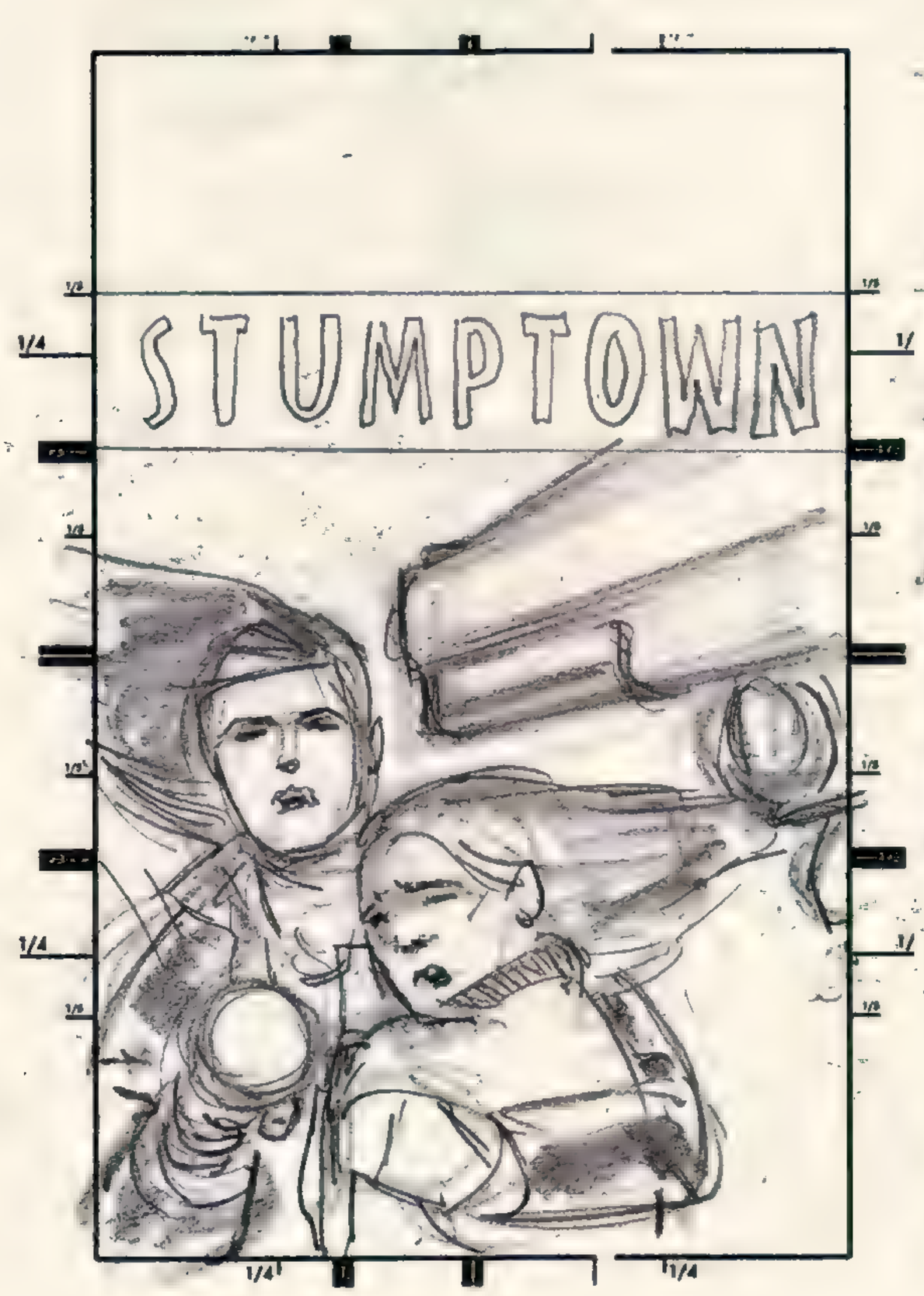
I found the beach driving back to Seattle from San Francisco, just north of Eureka. Perfect stormy seas, rainy, everything wet and clammy and loud. Not the saline-implant beaches of Los Angeles, nor the crunchy sharp shoreline of Northern Washington, something distinctly Oregonian to me, despite the fact that it was still in California and I haven't been to the Oregon Coast. So what do I know?

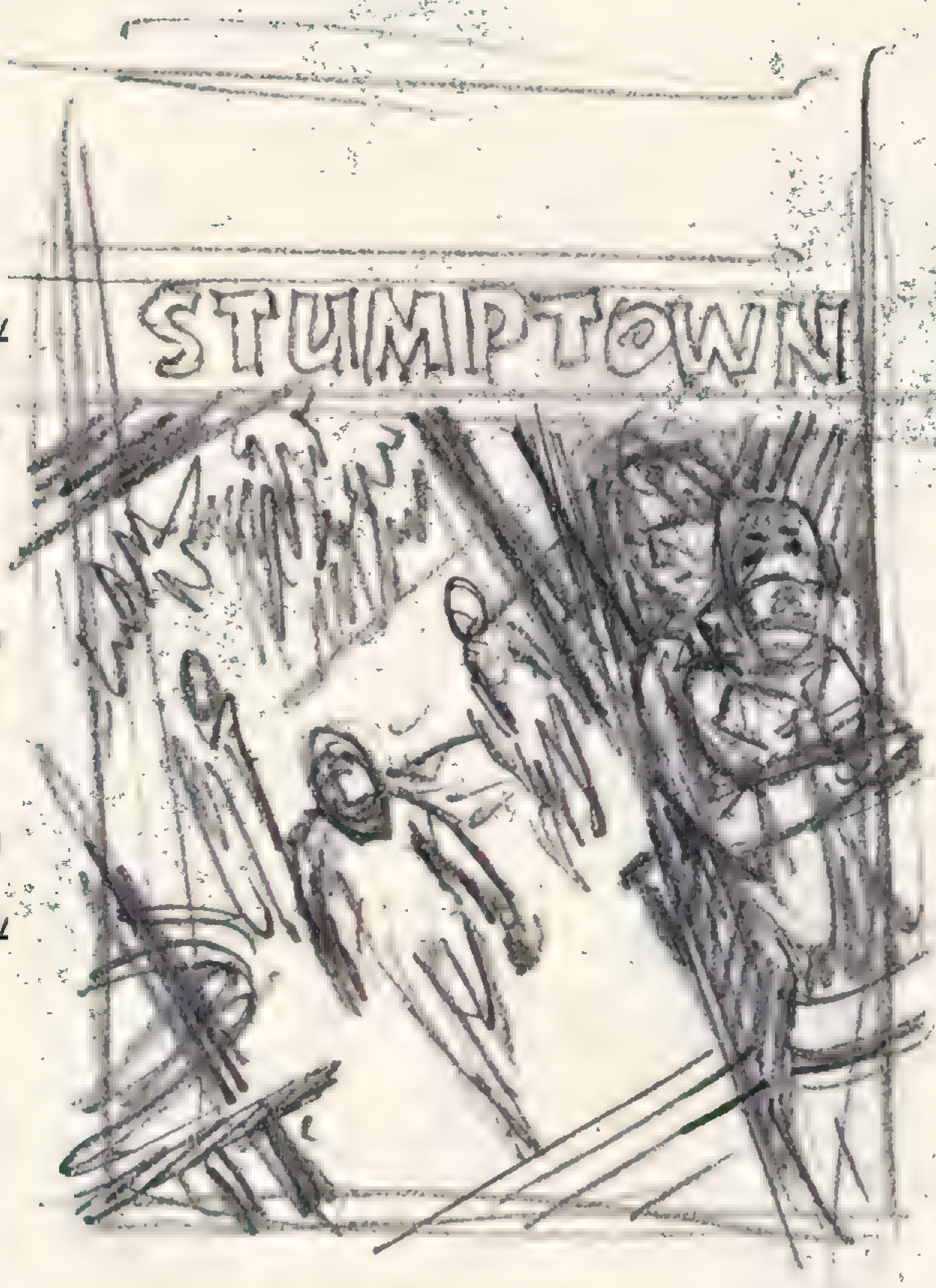
It's on the way to the aforementioned cabin that I set the opening of this issue. That drive where your cellphone is useless and you finally listen to that book on CD you got, where eagles dive from power-line pole perches to eat roadkill until you're 100 yards away. Where bears are a serious concern. At that cabin, there are shovels and metal mice-resistant cabinets and board games, and you can sit on the john with the door open. Where you brush your teeth with a bottle of water and it's nearly impossible to get the heat from the iron stove just right, you're too hot or too cold, too dry or it's too smoky...everything is difficult. And everything requires so much attention, and you're supposed to be able to relax, and you sleep like a lead weight at the bottom of a river.

It's that cabin where they are now, and I'm here at the drawing table like I am six or seven days a week, working. That loneliness sets in quickly, someone must have left the window open, and my thoughts go deeper inside my chest. I get into that place where it feels good, almost, to find the things I hate about myself, the ugly-irrespective-of-ducklingness, and to use them as ink.

When I think about the cabin, I think about the Northwest, how it's different here than it was in Los Angeles and Pittsburgh and Louisville and Nashville. How here Alaska is not a mythological fantasy destination but a place lots of people have actually been, they regularly







Cover roughs for issue four. I kind of like the fourth one, the one behind the door, but I believe the vote was unanimous for the second one.

vacationed there as kids. Here people have cabins and own snowmobiles (!) and chop wood, and yeah, they also watch reality TV and drink apple martinis and wear colored contacts, but there is a sense that geography matters, that feng shui is not just an esoteric concept, there's proof right outside your door (or just outside your town).

While everyone's away at the cabin, or the movies, or at dinner, I try again. And again. And eventually I get it, or I just move on. That loneliness is always there, on the drawing table or hiding in the bookshelves. But at the end of the day, I'm crawling into bed and the house is quiet. Except for the refrigerator and the running of the creek.

And if I ask myself, "what am I doing here?", I know the answer. I'm doing exactly what I've always wanted to do with my life.

More *Stumptown* coming soon. A lot of interesting things coming up in the next case, and it particularly hits a number of things close to my heart—guitars, drums, speeding tickets. We have a different plan on how we're going to release this next arc. Much to our dismay, and despite our promises to the contrary, this first arc was all over the place in terms of scheduling. We're not going to solicit the first issue of this one until the first three out of four are complete so there won't be any surprises along the way. The plan is that I'll be starting work on it in the next three weeks or so.

We were in Portland for the Stumptown Comics Fest and an exhibit of my work at Floating World Comics, staying downtown, and I woke up early and went exploring. I took a bunch of photos of the Theatre Paris down there. Didn't realize Greg had set a scene right there...serendipity. Or just that I like to take photos of porno theatres?

We made a very nice print in honor of that exhibit, only printed 20 of them and I have a few left for sale. I also have some cool prints from the Emerald City Comicon to sell, as well as some pretty nifty Stumptown t-shirts I've been selling at cons. If you're interested in buying any of this stuff, write me at matthewsouthworth@hotmail.com and we can see what it'll run you.

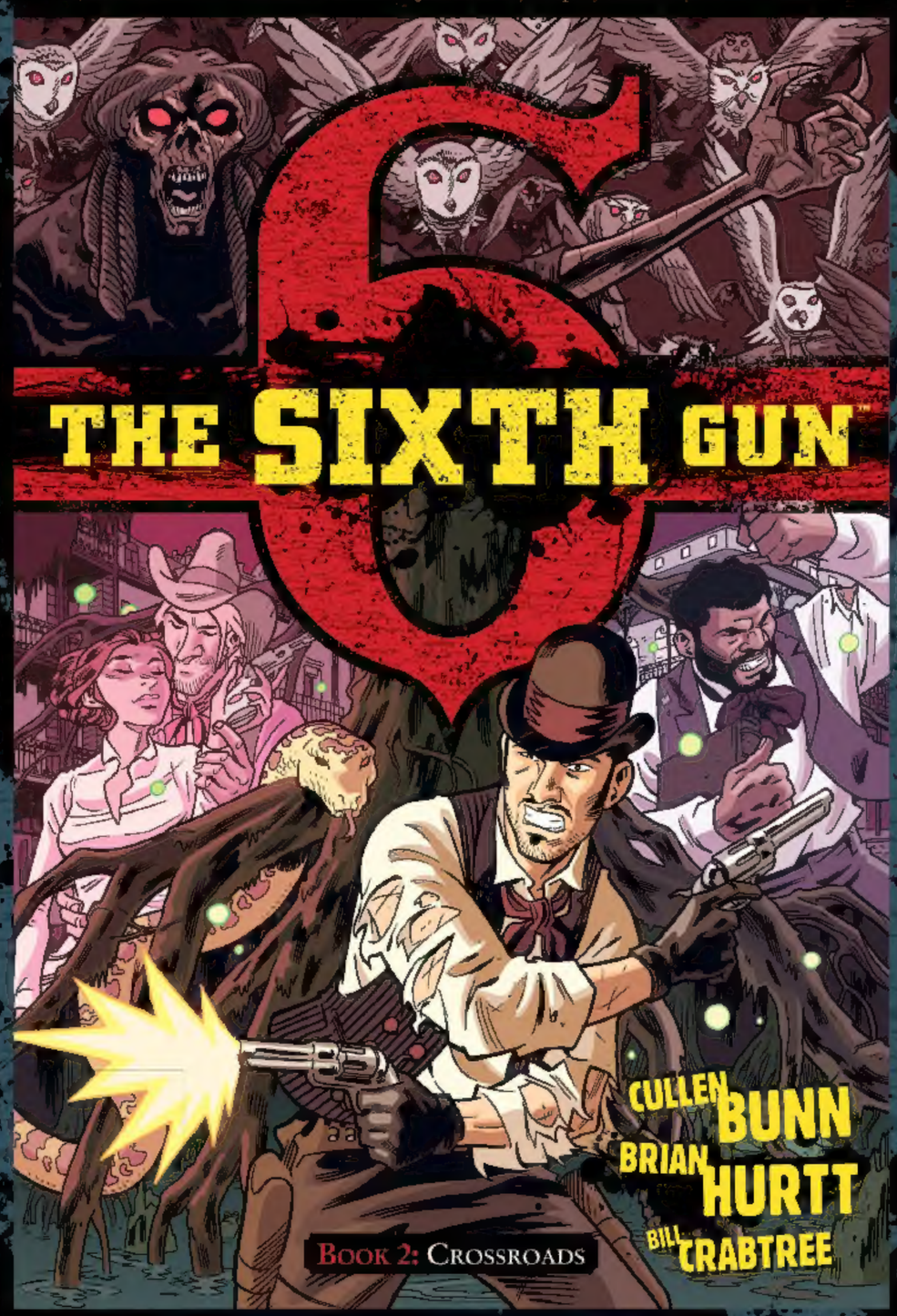
I sincerely hope you've found this first story to be worth the wait, and I hope you'll come back again. It's a real pleasure doing it, working with Greg, and it's a double pleasure hearing from you all, both via email and in person, that you're enjoying it. Please do stay in touch: matthewsouthworth@hotmail.com.

MATTHEW SOUTHWORTH, SEATTLE, AUGUST 8, 2010.

HOW THE WEST WAS REALLY WON.

"Say hello to your new favorite comic." –Matt Fraction, *The Invincible Iron Man, Casanova*

"Whacked-out western horror at its best" –Jason Aaron, *Scalped, Wolverine,* and *Punisher Max*



"Say hello to your new favorite comic."
–Matt Fraction, *The Invincible Iron Man, Uncanny X-Men*

THE SIXTH GUN BOOK ONE: COLD DEAD FINGERS
by Cullen Bunn & Brian Hurtt
Collecting issues 1 – 6 of the full-color series.
ON SALE NOW.

THE SIXTH GUN BOOK TWO: CROSSROADS
by Cullen Bunn & Brian Hurtt
Collecting issues 7 – 11 of the full-color series.
ON SALE IN JUNE.

Don't miss a moment of the action! *The Sixth Gun* on sale monthly!

ONI PRESS

www.onipress.com

The Sixth Gun is ™ & © 2011 Cullen Bunn and Brian Hurtt. Oni Press logo and icon are ™ & © 2011 Oni Press, Inc. All rights reserved.

I approached the climax of this story in perhaps a counter-intuitive way, staging it almost in the dark. Here are a few jpegs showing how I drew it, then loosely inked it, then blacked most of that out. Roughs, then pencils, then inks, then the big black marker that blots everything out. This theoretically makes things go faster but actually winds up taking more time and energy as you figure out what to keep and what to throw away. Kind of like moving—you spend more time sorting than you do actually packing.

"[Rucka] writes strong, tough, intelligent women, who don't have ridiculously disproportionate boobs... You should all check this out. Good solid stuff."

— Blair Butler, G4TV's Fresh Ink

STUMPTOWN INVESTIGATIONS • PORTLAND, OREGON

AN ONI PRESS PUBLICATION

ONIPRESS.COM • GREGRUCKA.COM
STUMPTOWNINVESTIGATIONS.COM